

NPL Site Narrative for Parsons Casket Hardware Co.

PARSONS CASKET HARDWARE CO. Belvidere, Illinois

Federal Register Notice: [July 22, 1987](#)

Conditions at proposal (January 22, 1987): The Parsons Casket Hardware Co. Site covers approximately 2 acres in a residential area of Belvidere, Boone County, Illinois. Parsons used an electroplating process for manufacturing metal fittings for caskets from 1898 until August 1982, when it filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 7 of the Federal bankruptcy code.

Wastes generated by Parsons included electroplating sludge, cyanide plating solutions, cyanide cleaning solutions, and bronze, nickel, and brass sludges. In 1982, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) found that approximately 120 drums of various sizes were stored inside and outside the manufacturing building. Many were dented, corroded, leaking, or had no lids; 34 had originated from Parsons' parent company, Dickey Grabler Co. of Cleveland, Ohio. About 4,800 gallons of wastes were stored in above- and below-ground tanks. An unlined lagoon contained approximately 166,500 gallons of liquid wastes and 1,230 cubic yards of sludges. The wastes had high levels of lead, copper, cyanide, and nickel, as did monitoring wells around the lagoon, according to EPA analyses.

Municipal wells within 3 miles of the site are the sole source of

drinking water for Belvidere's 15,200 residents, and all are potentially at risk of contamination. The nearest well is 1,500 feet from the site. The Kishwaukee River, which is used for fishing and recreation, is approximately 1,400 feet from the site.

Before Parsons filed for bankruptcy, the State ordered it to repackage all leaking drums and move them indoors. In October 1984, the State began cleaning up the lagoon, completing the operation in the spring of 1985. On December 7, 1984, Filter Systems, Inc., of Addison, Illinois, purchased the on-site building and agreed to recycle or remove the drums stored in the building. Filter Systems has removed the drums.

In July 1985, soil taken from the lagoon cleanup area still contained high levels of cyanide, nickel, and copper, according to EPA. No plans have yet been formalized to deal with that problem.

The plant acquired Interim Status when Parsons filed Part A of a permit application under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

This site is being proposed for the NPL because it satisfies a component of the NPL/RCRA policy: the owner or operator has demonstrated inability to finance appropriate remedial action by invoking bankruptcy laws.

Status (July 22, 1987): EPA is considering various alternatives for the site.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See [56 FR 5600](#), February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]